

We are grateful to Mesdames Lilly Calder and Harriet Jørgensen for translating Gunnerus' work for us, and to Curtis W. Sabrosky, Jr., for nomenclatural advice.

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Further breeding records from Zambia (No. 7)

by R. K. Brooke

Received 29th October, 1968

The last paper in this series is Brooke (1967). Since then a number of breeding records have been received from Mr. William Condry the author of *Birds and Wild Africa* (1967, Collins, London). I now draw attention to the most interesting ones and include Mr. Condry's field notes thereon. I am most grateful to him for making his data available. Mr. C. W. Benson has kindly criticised the draft of this paper.

Turdus pelios Bonaparte

Tropical Olive Thrush

At Ndundu near Mbala (formerly Abercorn) a nest was found on 14th January, 1964, containing two young. This date makes it the nest found latest in the season in Zambia. The nest was placed some 25 feet up in a fork near the top of a small tree near the drive to the house. The nest was very like that of the European Blackbird *T. merula* L. A hide was built and the parents showed no adverse reaction to it. The male sang freely nearby until 6th February, the young having flown on 31st January. He seldom helped to feed the young but once fed the female a spider. The female was seen to feed the young on earthworms, some ants and termites and an occasional spider. One youngster disappeared on 19th January. A marked similarity to the European Blackbird was noted in general habits and the alarm call despite the absence of sexual dimorphism in this species. The sexes were identified by behaviour.

Lagonosticta caerulea Vieillot

Grey Waxbill

At Ndundu a pair were first noted building a nest four and a half feet up in

a shrub on the lawn on 23rd January. Building continued until 30th January and was undertaken by both sexes. The nest was retort shaped with a three-inch tunnel entrance and was made of *Rhynchelytrum* grass including the heads and a little fern. All material was obtained from the nearby mushitu (evergreen forest growing in swampy ground and surrounded by grass). Building took place at any time of the day but chiefly in the evenings: sometimes both brought material and sometimes one would bring it to the other waiting in the nest. On 2nd and 3rd February there were eggs in the nest but they were not counted: both parents stayed in the nest for most of the day. On 5th, 6th and 7th February only one parent stayed in the nest and it is assumed that incubation had started. On 8th February the nest was destroyed by Ververt Monkeys *Cercopithecus aethiops* L.

Ortygospiza locustella (Neave)

Locust Finch

A nest with eight eggs was found on 13th February among the fish ponds by the Lumi River at Kawimbe near Mbala. The clutch is remarkably large, four to six eggs being usual in the African Estrildidae. The nest itself was a tiny ball of grass placed two inches above very shallow water in emergent vegetation. On 19th February the nest was re-examined and the young were found to have just hatched.

Turtur afer (L.)

Blue-spotted Wood-dove

The date given Brooke (1967) is not 14th November, 1963, but 14th September, 1965. The error is regretted.

Reference:

Brooke, R. K. 1967. Further breeding records from Zambia (No. 6). *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 87: 7: 120-122.

Replacement name for *Acrocephalus agricola brevipennis* (Severtzov)

by George E. Watson and Betty Jean Gray

Received 20th September, 1968

As long as the Cape Verde Island Cane Warbler *Calamodyta brevipennis* Keulemans (1866, *Nederl. Tijdsch. Dierk.* 3: 368) was retained in the African genera *Calomoeceator* or *Calamocichla*, it caused no problem of homonymy. But when Chapin (1949, pp. 7-16 in Mary and Schüz *Ornithologie als Biol. Wissensch.* Heidelberg) and White (1952, *Ibis* 94: 658-686) merged *Calomoeceator* and *Calamocichla* with *Acrocephalus*, *Calamodyta brevipennis* Keulemans became the senior homonym of *Salacaria brevipennis* Severtzov (1872, *Imp. Obshch. Lyubit. Est. Antropol. Etnoghr. Izv.* [1873] 8: 127). This name is applied by Vaurie (1959, *The Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, Passeriformes: 241) and Ripley (1961, *A synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan*: 467) to worn and dull coloured breeding and migrant Paddyfield Warblers, *Acrocephalus agricola*. Brightly coloured *agricola* are only known from migrants collected in both Pakistans, India, Assam and Burma from November to April. Williamson (1963, *Identification for Ringers* 1: 40-41), who believes that "*brevipennis*" is only a "phase" resulting when the feather tips wear off *agricola*, regards *agricola* as monotypic. If a substitute name is required for *Salicaria brevipennis* Severtzov, *Salicaria capistrata* Severtzov (*ibid*) is available. On the authority of Menzbier (*in litt.*), Pleske (1890, *Ornithographia Rossica* II: 552-60) cites *S. capistrata* as a synonym of *Acrocephalus agricola* (Jerdon) in addition to *S. brevipennis*. He also lists two male specimens collected by Severtzov (11646 and 11647) in the Leningrad Zoological Museum as belonging to the type series.